

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 06368 141943Z

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PN

SUBJECT: STUDENT AND LABOR GROUPS ISSUE COMMUNIQUE ON RECENT
PRICE INCREASES

1. SEPTEMBER 13 EDITIONS OF PRO-GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPERS
"CRITICA" AND "MATUTINO" GAVE PROMINENT COVERAGE TO A
COMMUNIQUE CRITICIZING RECENT INCREASES IN PRICES OF MILK
AND RICE. COMMUNIQUE WAS SIGNED BY FSTRP (LABOR FEDERATION
OF WORKERS OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA, FRACCION-LINKED LABOR
GROUP WHICH HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH FREE LABOR CTRP); FEP
(FEDERATION OF PANAMANIAN STUDENTS); AND FEDAMUNDE (NATIONAL
FEDERATION OF DEMOCRATIC WOMEN, WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION ALLIED
WITH COMMUNIST PARTY (PDP) AND FRACCION).

2. MAIN POINTS OF THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE ARE:

A. RECENT PRICE INCREASES UNFAIR BECAUSE THEY FALL
MOST HEAVILY ON THE POOR, ALREADY "FLOGGED BY TERRIBLE
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PAGE 02 PANAMA 06368 141943Z

INFLATION."

B. THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO DEAL WITH ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF PANAMA CAUSED BY GENERAL RECESSION, DROUGHT, THE CONSUMER SOCIETY AND MISMANAGEMENT OF NATIONAL ECONOMY, LATTER "IN LARGE MEASURE" THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING'S FAULT.

C. THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE IS TO STOP IMPORTING LUXURY GOODS AND MAKE DO WITH LOCAL PRODUCTS, THUS THE RICH WILL PAY. WITH THE MONEY SAVED BY THIS MEASURE PRICES OF STAPLE GOODS CAN BE LOWERED, NOT RAISED.

D. SIGNERS ARE CONFIDENT THAT THEIR PROPOSAL WILL BE ADOPTED BY ALL "RIGHT-THINKING" MEN, BUT ADD THAT SACRIFICE OF LUXURY IMPORTS WILL ONLY BE EFFECTIVE IF BUREAUCRATIC CORRUPTION AND THEFT OF PUBLIC FUNDS BY "CERTAIN OFFICIALS" CEASES.

THESE POINTS ARE ENCRUSTED IN A FINE ARABESQUE OF ANTI-IMPERIALIST-CAPITALIST-OLIGARCHIC JARGON.

3. COMMENT: MAIN INTEREST OF THIS DOCUMENT IS PROMINENT PLAY IT GOT IN PRO-GOVERNMENT PRESS. GOP HAS APPARENTLY ADOPTED A POLICY OF ALLOWING AT LEAST SOME OF THOSE WHO ARE ANGRY AND DISCONTENTED OVER RECENT PRICE RISES TO AIR THEIR GRIPEs. SPONSORSHIP OF THIS COMMUNIQUE BY GROUPS WHICH SUPPORT THE GOP IS ALSO ATTEMPT TO TAKE THIS ISSUE OUT OF HANDS OF MORE RADICAL STUDENT GROUPS (E.G. FER) WHICH MADE SUCH A NOISY POINT OF IT LAST FRIDAY.
JORDEN

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